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ABSTRACT

The Youth and Development Study represents a major investigation pertaining to the attitudes of students, their parents and teachers. A major question being asked is how and to what extent do a student's parents, teachers, and peers influence the student's attitudes about politics, integration, career aspirations and expectations, as well as a number of other topics. A representative sample of the Atlanta Metropolitan area high schools, their senior students, teachers, and parents was obtained. The students were interviewed individually, whereas the teachers and parents filled out shorter, self-administered versions of the student interview schedule. The principals completed a questionnaire concerning details about their school: enrollment, absenteeism, facilities, requirements for graduation, etc. In all, six Atlanta area high schools agreed to participate. Two were predominately white--one predominately middle class, the other predominately working class. The third was predominately black, and its students and their families belonged to the middle and upper classes. The fourth was about 80 percent black; here the class composition was primarily lower middle class. The remaining two schools, respectively, were one-third and two-thirds black and drew their stude ts from the upper and the lower middle classes. (Author/JM)

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Attitude Change from Parents to Children: A Statistical Resume of the Youth and Development Study

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UD 014891

Attitude Change from Parents to Children: A Statistical Resume of the Youth and Development Study

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In the fall of 1973 we contacted you and asked you to participate in our Youth and Development Study. Similar studies have been conducted elsewhere in the United States, but one has never been conducted in the urban deep South before. This study, therefore, represents a major investigation of questions pertaining to the attitudes on topics of contemporary importance of students, their parents and teachers. A major question being asked by this study is how and to what extent do a student's parents, teachers, and peers influence the student's attitudes about politics, integration, career aspirations and expectations, as well as a number of other topics. This paper presents some of the results of our investigation.

With your cooperation we obtained what we believe is a representative sample of the Atlanta Metropolitan area high schools, their senior students, teachers, and parents. The students were interviewed individually, whereas the teachers and parents filled out shorter, self-administered versions of the student interview schedule. The principals completed a questionnaire - concerning details about their school: enrollment, absenteeism, facilities, requirements for graduation, etc.

In all, six Atlanta area high schools agreed to participate in our study. Two of the high schools' enrollments were predominately white; one of these schools was predominately middle class; the other was predominately working class. The third school was predominately black, and its students and their families belonged to the middle and upper middle classes. The fourth school was about 80% black; here the class composition was primarily lower middle class. The remaining two schools, respectively, were 1/3 and 2/3 black and drew their students from the upper and the lower middle classes. The schools ranged geographically from central city to suburban, and both private (church and non-church affiliation) and public high schools were used

in this study.

The interviewing began in November of 1973 and was completed in March of 1974; approximately 85% of the total sample of high school seniors (for a total of 944) were interviewed by a staff of well-trained interviewers. In all, this sample gives us a broad base for confidence in the results, and in the conclusions drawn from the results which are provided in the following pages.

Parental response to the mailed questionnaires varied from school to school as did the teacher response. Excluding those questionnaires returned due to "address(ee) unknown," the parental response ranged from 57.1% to 79.3%. The teacher response, for the four schools where questionnaires were mailed to the teachers, ranged from 47.5% to 55.2%. (In the other two schools, the teachers completed their questionnaires while at school.) The overall rate of return was about 64.2% for parents, and 51.1% for teachers. Thus, we have sufficient numbers of completed questionnaires to run statistical analyses and to have confidence in the results.

This study is different from prior studies in several aspects -- the primary difference being that an event on the national political scene was occurring at the time of the interviewing: The Watergate scandal. The second major difference is that the few prior studies on political socialization which have employed a national sample of high school students, their parents and teachers, took place before the law allowing 18 year-olds to vote was passed. This difference should contemporize the results of our study, and hence, the results and conclusions should more accurately reflect the political activities and attitudes in American society today. A third difference between our study and prior studies on political socialization is the emergence of a third political party, the American Independent

Party (George Wallace) since the time when the other studies were conducted. This difference should lend further up-dating and applicability of our results as compared to the results from prior studies concerning the political attitudes and orientations of the American public. Finally, even though the bulk of socialization studies are carried out in single cities or towns, an urban area of the South has never before been studied in this way. The opportunities are great to compare patterns found in Atlanta to those discovered in other parts of the country.

SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS

The information below, taken from the questionnaires completed by the principals, provides some general information on the characteristics of the high schools in our sample.

For all the schools, the total student enrollment at the beginning of the 1974 academic year ranged from about 400 to about 1600 students. The total senior population in these schools ranged from 75 to 275.

Table 1

Some Detailed Information on the Six Sample Schools

Percentage of Seniors in School Programs	School 1	School 2	School 3	School 4	School 5	School 6
College Preparatory	35%	80%	100%	10%	10%	30%
Industrial, Trade, and/or Vocational	20	--	--	35	14	20
Commercial and/or Distributive Educ.	35	--	--	20	17	20
Diversified Cooperative Educ.	10	--	--	5	28	--
General Diploma	--	20	--	30	31	30

Table 1 - Continued

Some Detailed Information on the Six Sample Schools

	School 1	School 2	School 3	School 4	School 5	School 6
Turn-over Rates	18%	14%	3%	15%	3%	6%
Absenteeism	7	5	2	15	11	8
Drop-outs	10	NA	0	14	5	2
Percent White	99	61	98	96	70	1

The various programs or tracks which students can follow reflect the diversity of our sample. Most of the senior students were enrolled in the college preparatory program as compared to the other programs offered by the schools (see Table 1). As would be expected, those schools which had a middle class composition or above had a preponderance of senior students following the college preparatory program, whereas those schools composed of below middle class students tended to have a majority of senior students enrolled in the non-college preparatory programs.

The schools which had a majority of students in the college preparatory program, as would be expected, had the largest number of graduated seniors from the prior academic year enrolled in a four-year college. Very few of the graduated seniors from the six schools went to a junior college (not more than 10%), and not more than 20% of the prior year's graduated seniors enrolled in some other form of post-high school training or education.

These data are intriguing when one views the drop-out rate of students in the 10th to 12th grades. Not more than 14% of these students left high school during the 1972-1973 academic year, according to the principals.

Both the turn-over rate and the rate of absenteeism of the 10-12th grade students were also low (see Table 1). The repeal of the draft law and the end of the Vietnamese conflict do not appear to have increased the drop-out rate, which was estimated to be about 25% of the seniors in a nationwide study conducted in 1965 (Jennings & Niemi).[1]

STUDENTS AND PARENTS

The fundamental question in socialization research deals with the extent of influence, intended or unintended, which parents have on their children. The bulk of this report displays the feelings which both children and parents dispaly on a number of items. From this, we are able to tell whether the younger generation generally resembles the parental generation or whether it is moving into a situation of greater disagreement.

A number of theoretical approaches have distinguished young people according to their sex and their race. All of us have observed differences between boys and girls and between blacks and whites. To measure the extent to which those differences emerge from our data, all of our results are controlled by race and sex.

The first of the attitudes which we investigate involves the sense that the individual citizen has some say in what the government does. Clearly, this is important in a democracy, because the individual, in his role as voter, exercises a crucial function. Without a wise and vigilant electorate, a democratic system risks moving in undesirable directions.

This feeling that political influence by the individual is possible is called political efficacy. The data for students and parents, by sex and

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[1] Jennings, M. Kent, & Niemi, R. G. The transmission of political values from parent to child. The American Political Science Review, 62(1):169-184, 1968.

race, are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Percent of Students and Parents who Score Low on a Measure of Political Efficacy, by Sex and Race

Students				Parents	
Black		White			
Male	Female	Male	Female	Black	White
63.6 (184)	56.9 (172)	60.5 (276)	54.4 (290)	42.3 (379)	44.3 (731)

In this table, the entries represent those who agree with the statement, "People like me have no say in what the government does." The student responses in Table 2 indicate three things. First, there is generally a very high level of inefficacious response, with roughly 3 of every 5 students declaring that they felt no ability to influence government. Second, we see that racial differences are slight. Blacks tend to agree with the question more than whites, but by only a few points. More significant is the difference by sex, the third message. For both races, girls are slightly more efficacious than boys. Given the traditional dominant role of men in American politics, this seems surprising. However, other research has made similar findings. It is explained by the fact that girls are quicker to mature than boys, and as high school seniors, have not yet lost that advantage. Eventually, in their confrontation with the real world, their sense of political efficacy will probably decline.

For the parents, there is clearly no difference according to race. However, the parents are significantly less likely than their children to believe that they have no say in what the government does. Only two in five, whether black or white, feel this way. Can we therefore conclude from

this that the younger generation is considerably less efficacious than the older one? Very likely not. One of the significant determinants of political efficacy is experience with attempts at political influence. Students, typically, have had no such experience. The political world is to them the domain of adults, and as such remains somewhat distant and even forbidding. As these students mature into adulthood and gain experience in politics, we can expect an increase toward their parents' level of efficacy.

The next set of indicators involves a concept which is closely related to political efficacy. This is political trust and its opposite, political cynicism. Clearly, the loss of political efficacy can have serious effects on the electorate. One of these might be a withdrawal into apathy. Another might be a reaction of a violent or illegal nature. In either case, the individual has not only lost the feeling of efficacy in politics, he has lost confidence in the system as well. He has passed from a trusting to a cynical or alienated position.

Trust in politics has been declining rapidly in the United States over the past few years, and this decline is only partly explained by Watergate (see below). Table 3 presents the relevant data from our study.

Table 3

Percent of Students and Parents Giving a Trusting Response to a Political Trust Question, by Sex and Race

Students				Parents	
Black		White			
Male	Female	Male	Female	Black	White
16.2 (186)	15.0 (173)	48.7 (275)	42.2 (291)	33.0 (383)	52.5 (725)

These entries are the percent of each category who said, "almost always" or "often" when asked, "How much of the time do you think you can trust the government in Washington to do what is right?"

In contrast to Table 2, we see in Table 3 a profound difference between the races. White students' levels of trust are at least reasonably high with nearly half the responses in the trusting categories. Black students, on the other hand, give the trusting response only about one time in seven.

This condition reflects a number of things. First, let us examine parental patterns. We find that in both cases, parents are more trusting of government than their children. While further analysis is required to probe this relationship completely, we might hypothesize that the Watergate events have caused some of the observed student-parent difference. That is, for adults, the question of trust in government has been resolved by perhaps twenty years of observation of and experience with political phenomena. While Watergate may have an effect on trust, for this older generation it surely was only one of many considerations. For the students, on the other hand, Watergate is probably the one and only vivid political happening. Even the death of John Kennedy occurred when most of these students were seven or eight years old. Therefore, we would expect to find lower levels of trust among younger people. Whether this lessened feeling of trust will persist is another matter. As these students mature, and build up their own twenty-year evaluation of government, Watergate will probably not remain as the central element. And one hopes that future evaluation points will reflect our government in a better light.

Another aspect of Table 3 concerns racial differences. We have already noted that black students are much less trusting than whites. This is also true of the parents. Therefore, some of the difference between the students can be attributed to parental differences. However, another difference exists.

White students are only about seven points lower than their parents on this measure of trust. Black students, on the other hand, are some 17 points lower, and the difference might be even greater if the parental trust level was not so low to begin with. If we assume (again, this is a simplifying assumption which must be substantiated with further analysis) that the lower student trust is produced by Watergate, then for some reason, blacks have reacted much more deeply than whites to these events. While this difference is not easily explained it may relate to the differing bases of trust which exist for the two races. Whites' political trust tends to be "diffuse." That is, government is trusted as an abstract phenomenon. This feeling of trust is inculcated by basically trusting parents, who, directly or indirectly over an entire childhood, lead their children to see the government in highly positive terms. With such a reservoir of positive feeling, even the highly negative image of government projected by Watergate does not damage the basic belief to a significant extent. Among blacks, there is a different tendency. (We do not suggest, of course, that all blacks follow the stated pattern, any more than we suggest that all whites follow the pattern outlined above.) That is, there is a lesser liklihood that a strongly positive image of government will be projected by the parent during the black students' childhood. This is reflected both in Table 3's evidence that black parents are indeed less trusting, and in the fact that political reality has often not been trustworthy from the point of view of many blacks. Whatever the case, the basis of trust for blacks tends to be performance-oriented. If government demonstrates on a day-to-day basis that it is trustworthy, then black levels of trust are maintained. However, an indicator of performance such as Watergate will have a direct impact on feelings of trust among many blacks, as distinct from many whites. Hence, the much lower trust scores for black students.

The third set of data involves an extension of the political trust question. As we hypothesize above, Watergate can be expected to have exercised some effect on the levels of trust of the American population, and especially on young people. In our sample, every single student interviewed said he or she had heard of Watergate. One of the questions which we pursued was whether or not these events had had any effect on their general political outlook. This is not an easily-answered question, unfortunately. We can look at those who have low trust, as we did in Table 3, but we have no idea whether blacks, for instance, display so little trust because of Watergate, or whether they had little trust before Watergate happened.

We approach this problem by combining the trust question with the item which determined whether Watergate changed the respondent's political outlook. If a person is low on trust, and said that Watergate did change his political outlook, we conclude that this individual's level of trust was influenced by Watergate. On the other hand, a person with low trust, but who said Watergate did not change his political outlook, would be in a different group altogether; one in which Watergate did not alter the level of trust.

Table 4 is a rich display, but we can discuss one or two of the salient

Table 4

Distribution, by Race, of Students in Four Analytical Groups

	Did Watergate Change Your Political Outlook	Level of Trust	Whites	Blacks
1.	No	High	34.2%	20.0%
2.	No	Low	16.1	25.8
3.	Yes	Low	16.4	37.3
4.	Yes	High	33.3	16.7
			100.0%	100.0%
			(354)	(233)

points without difficulty. First, we would expect blacks to be clustered in group 2. This follows from Table 3, which showed blacks to have so little political trust. Watergate would not have been able to decrease trust of many of these individuals, because their levels of trust were at rock-bottom already. Indeed, we see that in group 2, blacks are more frequently represented than whites by about 3 to 2.

Second, group 3 is interesting because it captures the possible negative effect of Watergate. These are the people who lowered their feelings of trust after witnessing the parade of Watergate events. Overall, it is most significant to note that this group contains about one-quarter of all the respondents, regardless of race. This particular measure of the deleterious effect of Watergate, in other words, has shown it to be significant, if not alarmingly large.

Another of the attributes of American citizens which is often taken as a measure of the health of the political system is interest in politics. One of the assumptions of democratic government is that the voting public takes the time and effort to inform itself about politics. One indicator of this willingness to keep informed is the level of political interest. In our study, we asked both parents and students: "Would you say you were very much interested, somewhat interested, or not very interested in the Presidential election of 1972 between Nixon and McGovern?" Table 5 shows the proportion of each category which said "very much interested."

Table 5

Percent of Students and Parents who are Interested in Political Campaigns, by Sex and Race

Students				Parents	
Black		White			
Male	Female	Male	Female	Black	White
31.6	23.4	36.6	30.8	72.2	74.7
(190)	(175)	(276)	(292)	(381)	(733)

We can see that differences by race and sex exist among students, but they are generally small. Black students are somewhat less interested than whites, for each sex. This may reflect the slightly stronger tendency of blacks to feel politically inefficacious (see Table 2), or it may reflect a judgement by blacks that political campaigns are not important input mechanisms. One might naturally expect, given the history of the civil rights movement, that blacks would be more attuned to litigation through the courts as a mechanism of bringing their political demands to bear.

A second small but interesting difference exists between the sexes. For both races, girls are somewhat less interested in the presidential campaign than boys. Since no racial differences exist, we would not look to the explanation presented in the previous paragraph in this case. Rather, we recall the statements made earlier on the subject of sex differences. Since girls mature earlier, their personalities will be more coherent and stronger than boys', throughout adolescence. We found that girls tended to feel slightly more efficacious than boys, and suggested that this was a reflection of the earlier process of maturation. However, at least in pre-women's liberation America, females eventually learned to take a submissive role in politics. Virtually all important political roles (with the significant exception of school board), from candidate to campaign manager and top staffers, were (and are) held by men. The typical woman's job was canvassing and envelope-stuffing.

What women's lib will do to all of this is difficult to say. This lower level of interest does suggest, however, that these girls have already begun to receive signals that few opportunities exist for them in politics, and their levels of interest may be reflecting that discovery.

One of the more encouraging findings, from the point of view of

the health of the political system, comes from the parents' response to the question on interest. Compared to a meager one-third of the students, nearly three-quarters of all parents, regardless of race, said that they were very much interested in the 1972 campaign. The question remains, why do the children of these parents fall so far below their levels of political interest? Clearly, the answer lies in the extent of involvement in and experience with politics. High school seniors are mainly concerned with getting a job or getting into college, or perhaps with getting married and starting a family. They are about to pass through a very unstable period of their lives, and this absorbs most of their attention. Small wonder that rather little energy is left over to worry about a political campaign. What this means is that as these young people mature, their interest in politics will increase. This is the traditional pattern. However, whether this generation, perhaps a bit alienated by Viet-nam and Watergate, will eventually duplicate the interest of their parents, remains to be seen.

The final political attitude measure which will be presented in this report is partisan self-identification. This is the enduring feeling held by many Americans that one or the other of our major parties usually presents the most favorable selection of candidates at election time. Of course, people often vote in violation of this feeling when the circumstances merit. In the contemporary South, for instance, widespread disagreement with the policies of the national Democratic Party has led to heavy votes for the Republican and American Independent candidates, even though the South traditionally has voted Democratic. Nonetheless, the sense of party identification represents an explanatory variable of some impact in the study of government. It gives us an idea of how the electorate will <u>tend</u> to vote, subject to the influence of events and personalities.

Table 6

Distribution of Party Identification for Students and Parents, by Sex and Race

	Students				Parents	
	Black		White			
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Black	White
Strong Democrat	22.6%	23.0%	5.9%	3.8%	50.9%	9.7%
Weak Democrat	5.8	6.3	2.6	5.2	5.4	3.8
Independent Democrat	28.4	27.6	18.3	16.0	28.5	24.8
Independent	22.6	27.6	40.3	41.3	7.6	23.9
Independent Republican	5.8	5.2	16.1	16.3	1.6	21.7
Weak Republican	4.2	1.7	4.0	4.5	1.1	3.1
Strong Republican	8.4	6.3	7.3	3.5	.4	5.7
American Independent	2.1	2.3	5.5	9.4	4.4	7.0
	99.9% (190)	100.0% (174)	100.0% (273)	100.0% (288)	99.9% (380)	99.6% (730)

Here again, looking at the student data, we wee that sex differences are insiginifcant, but that differences by race are large. Specifically, blacks declare a loyalty to the Democratic Party about half the time, while for whites, barely a quarter call themselves Democrats. This may mean, of course, that as this generation passes into adulthood, the basis of support for the Democrats will weaken (among whites, at least). A number of observations, particularly of the last three Presidential elections, would lead us to conclude that this has already happened. However, it is not at all clear that this weakening of Democratic loyalty means an increase in Republican loyalty. Republican identifiers among these white students are basically no more numerous than Democratic identifiers. Most whites fall

in the Independent group, declaring loyalty to neither major party. Does this mean, then, that these young people are using the Independent identification as a sort of "half-way house" which will ultimately see them settle on the Republican side? Some scholars have suggested that this will occur, but our evidence does not allow us to answer that question. The future partisanship of these white students stands yet to be revealed. More than likely, only a few of these individuals could say themselves what their ultimate partisanship will be.

Among blacks, there are no such ambiguities. Our sample of students has declared solid loyalty to the Democratic Party. This, of course, was not always true. During the 1950's, blacks were more loyal to the Republican Party than whites, with both groups remembering it as the party of Lincoln. History sometimes unfolds in strange ways, however, and the year 1964 clearly revealed for the first time that it was the national Democratic Party which staked its position behind the civil rights movement. The result has been the strong support by blacks of the Democrats since that time.

What role have the parents played in the development of party loyalty in their children? Traditionally, research has found that partisanship is one of the most-often inherited of all parental political attitudes. Indeed in our data the proclivities of the parents are reflected by the children. The main difference seems to be that parents are much less likely to think of themselves as Independents. The frequency is slightly more than half as great for white parents as for white students, and among blacks, less than one third as great. This too is a traditional pattern. With less experience in choosing candidates, young people have not yet formed partisan loyalties which many of them will eventually adopt. White we cannot say whether the passage of time will make the children exactly like their parents

with respect to partisanship, we can certainly expect that the number of Independents among the young will be vastly reduced.

A curious difference appears between black parents and their children, and it is worthy of note. Where only 3.1% of older blacks identify with the Republican Party, nearly 16% of the younger generation declare this loyalty. This is important evidence, for it suggests that in Atlanta, at least, the appeal of the Republican Party is not directed only at whites.

Besides the consideration of political attitudes, the second major thrust of the study is to investigate the nature of attitudes about relations between the races. This, of course, is a topic of great sensitivity, and because of this, interpretation of our results must be made with due caution. Nonetheless, problems of public policy often involve such questions, as the recent difficulties with busing for school integration have made painfully obvious. In order to assess the limits to which such policy can be expected to extend, one vital bit of information is the opinions of the public which is the recipient of that policy. Hence our interest.

The major goal of this resume will be simply to present the state of mind of our respondents on a number of questions in the area of race relations. This will provide an indicator of how the larger population views these issues. In addition, the comparison between the parental and the student generation will allow some inferences regarding the presence and nature of change in these attitudes.

The first set of variables involves a simple assessment of how our respondents view racial contact of one sort or another. Three variables are presented here. They are the responses to the following questions. 1) In general, it is all right for black and white people to work together at the same job; 2) In general, it is all right for black and white people to

be close friends; 3) In general, it is all right for black and white people to date each other. Table 7 presents the percent of students and parents who agreed with each item.

Table 7

Percent of Students and Parents Agreeing with Three Racial Contact Items

	Students				Parents	
	Black		White			
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Black	White
Hold the Same Job	96.3% (187)	97.6% (171)	97.7% (275)	98.3% (291)	99.7% (381)	91.0% (731)
Close Friends	93.0% (187)	96.5% (172)	94.9% (272)	94.8% (289)	97.5% (380)	75.2% (726)
Dating	88.3% (189)	76.9% (173)	50.4% (274)	40.0% (290)	83.5% (374)	17.4% (718)

On the student side, we see for the first time significant differences by both sex and race, but these emerge only in the case of the most extreme item; that involving inter-racial dating. In the questions about fair employment practices and inter-racial friendships, endorsements by both sexes and both races is nearly unanimous. All approvals exceed ninety percent, and five of the eight exceed 95%. We interpret this to mean that in these kinds of social situations, the respondents to our instrument make no distinction by race.

There is a clear difference in the question involving inter-racial dating. White endorsement of this kind of inter-racial contact falls to around 50% for boys, and only 40% for girls. In other words, about 55% of all white respondents do not feel that it is "all right for black and

white people to date each other." The contrasting response among blacks is interesting. Endorsement of inter-racial dating by blacks is also lower than for the other forms of contact, but still, some four of every five blacks still believe that this is all right. One possible interpretation of these data would be that overall, blacks are less sensitive to racial differences than are whites, although such simple conclusions are always subject to qualification by further analysis.

The parents' attitudes on this issue are also revealing. There is virtually no difference between black children and their parents on any of the three items. There is an inter-generational continuity which suggests that attitudes among blacks on the topic of racial interaction are not only quite liberal, but are also not changing rapidly. On the other hand, the inter-generational difference displayed by whites gives evidence of considerable movement. While white parents are nearly as unanimous in their support of fair employment practices as their children, the same is not true of the other two questions. Only three-quarters agree that close friendships between the races are all right, while virtually all their children do agree with that question. And finally, even though the endorsement of young whites of inter-racial dating falls to about 45%, among white parents, scarcely one in six is in sympathy. Overall, young whites do reflect their parents' attitudes. However, the evidence seems clear that the young are less likely to reject the various forms of racial contact than are members of the older generation.

This resume concludes by presenting a second dimension of racial feeling: perception of discrimination. This is a variable of both social and theoretical importance. Clearly, the nature of demands made by blacks on the political system will depend in large measure on whether they believe

they are being unfairly treated. On the other side of the coin, the kind of response whites make to black demands depends in part on the extent to which whites believe those demands to be legitimate.

The entries in Table 8 show the percentage of each race/sex group which responds "mainly due to blacks being discriminated against" to the question: "On the average, black people in Georgia have worse jobs, education and housing than white people. Do you think this is mainly due to blacks being discriminated against or mainly due to something about blacks themselves?"

Table 8

Percent of Students and Parents Responding "Mainly due to Blacks Being Discriminated Against," by Race and Sex

Students				Parents	
Black		White			
Male	Female	Male	Female	Black	White
29.7% (185)	28.9% (173)	29.4% (272)	22.5% (285)	45.7% (381)	12.8% (708)

The student responses to the question of perceived discrimination show two things. First, there is general agreement across both sex and race. White females are slightly less ready to account for black deprivation by the mechanism of discrimination, but the difference is small. The other important aspect of the student responses is the relatively small proportion of students who gave this answer. About half of the white sample said "some of both" in answer to the question, while about 20% said "mainly due to something about blacks themselves." Throughout, there are no differences by race. Black students responded in essentially the same way.

What this suggests is that since there is no difference by race in the perceived cause of racial inequality, there is potentially common ground for finding solutions. Needless to say, this single table only begins the investigation, and a great deal more must be done before any firm conclusions can be reached.

The parents, on the other hand, display a significantly different perception of the situation. Black parents are more likely than their children to attribute deprivation to discrimination, while white parents are less likely than their children to do so. In other words, in this case, both races are changing from the older to the younger generation, and the effect of the change is to eliminate racial differences almost entirely. We would of course like to know whether these changes will be enduring. This kind of information is not attainable in the present study. However, by investigating other associated opinions and behaviors, we hope eventually to be able to form more meaningful statements about the impact of generational differences.

To conclude, this resume has presented a small sampling of the data which have been collected by the Youth and Development Study. The next step in our research is to construct theory to explain levels of agreement with certain items, or racial differences, for instance. Theories will then be tested by examining sequences of relationships with a number of predictor variables.

As we promised initially, all manuscripts will be provided to the administrations of the schools which helped us in this effort. In addition, individuals may obtain copies of further reports by writing to:

Youth and Development Study
Room 634 Graduate Studies Research Center
University of Georgia
Athens, Georgia 30602

Thank you again for your fine cooperation.

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